

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 70

TIME
27 May, 1985

A Defector Warns: "What Fools"

The top Soviet priority is acquiring U.S. technology

The Reagan Administration's attempts to stanch the flow of technology to the Soviet Union, primarily directed at the shipment of computers, microelectronics and software, have also involved efforts to prevent publication or open discussion of certain unclassified technical research—a policy that has angered many scientists. Yet there is growing evidence to support Washington's concern. In an exclusive interview with TIME's Frank Melville in London, a former officer in the GRU, the Kremlin's military intelligence agency, has affirmed the fact that acquiring American high technology is the agency's No. 1 priority. Other comments of this recent defector, whose identity is being guarded by British intelligence:

Spying directed at finding out the enemy's order of battle is no longer necessary—it is all set out for the Soviet high command to read in the military balance sheets published by organizations such as Jane's and the International Institute for Strategic Studies, and in *Flight International* magazine and the *International Defense Review*. Even knowing the strategic plans of NATO for resisting a Soviet invasion across the north German plain is not all that important. What really interests the Soviets is such things as clues to laser components in systems for navigating nuclear submarines underwater, the guidance mechanisms of antitank missiles, and the engine air filters you put into battle tanks. The fact is that military technology has become the main espionage battlefield.

The Soviet Union can launch the first satellite, the first astronaut in space and the Second World War-winning T-34 tank, but it is behind—perhaps as much as a decade—in high-tech avionics, guidance systems and the whole range of electronics. But the Soviet designer is not stupidly proud. If someone has a better idea than he does, he accepts it. And that is what GRU activities in the West are all about.

Military intelligence sends to Moscow everything Soviet technology cannot make. They concentrate their efforts on the large number of smaller supplier firms working for major companies like Aerospatiale or British Aircraft Corp. We go after suppliers who are not so aware of our existence and try to fit together the whole picture [of a plane or a missile].

What is Moscow's current priority for GRU? The plate covering the U.S. shuttle vehicle through the enormous temperatures is one—how to connect [the tiles] with the metal. That the GRU would very much like to know about.

I think about half the achievement in Soviet military power has been very heavily influenced by the West. I speak

about Soviet tanks, antitank missiles, antiaircraft missiles, aircraft and submarines. Sometimes you see a Soviet tank and it's a genuine Soviet tank. But inside you can see the stabilizers for the tank guns, night vision, communications equipment and engines that owe their existence to Western technology.

In one instance, a lot of money was used to bribe some German technicians in order to acquire a [West German] Leopard tank. The question was how to get the engine to the U.S.S.R. The solution was for the Soviet consul in the area to buy a yacht and have its engine taken out and replaced with the Leopard's engine. The yacht then rendezvoused several miles out to sea with a Soviet merchant ship, to which the engine was transferred.

Another exercise was carried out on an American missile-firing range in Germany. Some shepherds recruited by Soviet military-intelligence agents were used

to scour the range looking for components of the fired missiles. The shepherds were told by their GRU directors to collect every piece of metal they could find. The GRU was not interested in warheads as such, but in elements of the guidance system that experts in Moscow were able to use to improve their equivalent missiles. Take the Soviet Strela-2 antiaircraft missile—it's an exact copy of the American Redeye. Take the SU-15 super-

sonic fighter, which destroyed the South Korean aircraft [Flight 007]. The technology in the SU-15 was stolen abroad.

President Reagan is quite right. Everything you give the Soviet Union, they use for military purposes. The West should cease all forms of technology transfer to the Soviets, not just high tech. Comrade Gorbachev is a realistic man. I am sure that putting himself into Reagan's shoes, he's saying to himself, "What bloody fools these Americans have been in taking so long to plug this hole."



West Germany's Leopard tank